

VZCZCXRO2536
RR RUEHDE RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHDJ #1099 2531423
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 101423Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0754
INFO SOMALIA COLLECTIVE
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 001099

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/09/10

TAGS: [PINS](#) [MASS](#) [PREL](#) [DJ](#) [SO](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI/SOMALIA: FRENCH-TRAINED TFG FORCES TO RETURN TO MOGADISHU

CLASSIFIED BY: James Swan, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(A), (B), (D)

1.(C) The first contingent of French-trained Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) forces will begin returning to Mogadishu o/a Sept. 18, according to the Commander of French Forces in Djibouti (FFDJ), BG Thierry Caspar-Fille-Lambie. This contingent of 150 recruits will just have completed a six-week basic infantry course. The French have committed to train a total of 500 Somali forces in Djibouti. A second tranche of 374 TFG troops is to begin arriving in Djibouti o/a Sept. 26 to receive French training, according to the Somali Charge in Djibouti, Abdirahman Hirabe.

¶2. (C) Caspar told Ambassador Sept. 7 that the French had "made soldiers" of the raw recruits, although the training was brief and covered only individual skills (and not small-unit operations, as the Djiboutian-provided training does). A visiting member of a European Union delegation that observed the French training Sept. 4 told us the recruits appeared well-motivated. Each day began with a symbolic raising of the Somali and Djiboutian flags to instill national pride, and the trainees sang patriotic songs during a display of marching for the visitors. The EU representative reported that most of the French trainees were Hawiye, albeit from two different sub-clans (Abgal and Hawadle). Caspar said the recruits assured him of their eagerness to return to Somalia to fight al-Shabaab.

¶3. (C) Caspar explained that the TFG had committed to maintain the French-trained cohort as a single operational unit upon its return to Somalia. Djiboutian officers participated as observers in the French training program, he said, both to monitor the training being conducted in their country and to assist with interpretation. Somali Charge Hirabe told us he has pressed the TFG leadership to ensure that all necessary preparations (lodging, food, equipment, payment, etc.) are in place when the trainees return to Mogadishu. TFG training coordinator Col. Mahdi personally traveled to the Somali capital to implore top security officials to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for their return.

¶4. (C) The French-trained recruits will return to Mogadishu on regularly scheduled passenger airlines linking Djibouti and Mogadishu. Caspar said the French did not plan any media for the return of the first group of trainees. Instead, the FFDJ will hold a public event later in the fall (TBD) to mark completion of the training of the full 500.

SWAN